TELEGRAM **Department of State**

UNCLASSIFIED

Control: 13749
Rec'd: FEBRUARY 19, 1960
12:38 PM

FROM: HABANA

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 2092, FEBRUARY 19

PRIORITY

PRIME MINISTER CASTRO SPOKE OVER TELEVISION APPROXIMATELY THREE AND HALF HOURS NIGHT FEBRUARY 18. DEVOTED FIRST HOUR TO ACCOUNT OF EXPLOSION THAT MORNING OVER SUGAR CENTRAL "ESPANA" OF AIR CRAFT WHICH HAD COME FROM UNITED STATES, AND APPARENTLY WAS ATTEMPTING TO BOMB THE CENTRAL. DISPLAYED PIECES OF AIRCRAFT, PARTIALLY DESTROYED CHARTS AND MAPS, AND DOCUMENTATION ONE OF CREW. DISPLAYED U.S. PASSPORT, BEARING NAME ROBERT ELLIS FROST. READ ANOTHER DOCUMENT, INDICATING FROST MEMBER CIVIL DEFENSE ORGANIZATION FOR STATE OF UTAH. ALSO DISPLAYED PILOT LOG OF FROST, SHOWING FLIGHTS FEBRUARY 3, 15 AND 17, WHICH CASTRO SAID WERE SAME DATES ON WHICH UNIDENTIFIED AIR CRAFT BURNED CUBAN SUGAR CANE FIELDS. NOT CLEAR WHETHER DOCUMENTATION WAS FOUND ON BODY OF OCCUPANT OF AIRCRAFT WHO WAS BLOWN OUT OF IT BY EXPLOSION. CASTRO SAID OTHER OCCUPANT COMPLETELY DESTROYED AND UNIDENTIFIABLE.

ACCORDING TO RECONSTRUCTION OF FLIGHT BY CASTRO, AIRCRAFT TOOK OFF FROM TAMIAMI AIRPORT NEAR MIAMI, FLEW TO STRIP SOME THIRTY MILES (COORDINATES 25 DEGRESS 17 N, 80 DEGREES 53 W) SOUTHWEST OF HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE, AND FROM THERE TO CUBA. CLAIMED THIS CLEARLY SHOWN BY NOTATIONS ON CHARTS, WHICH ALSO SHOWED ROUTES FOR OTHER PROJECTED OR COMPLETED FLIGHTS OVER CUBA.

CASTRO SAID PILOTS WERE CLEARLY AMERICAN MERCENARIES, WORKING FOR CUBAN COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES. SAID THE INCIDENT SHOULD BE CAUSE FOR DEEP SHAME TO UNITED STATES, WHICH HAD CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THAT PREVIOUS FLIGHTS HAD NOT ORIGINATED THERE, IN SPITE OF PROTESTATIONS OF CUBAN GOVERNMENT. ADDED CUBAN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY D.ZISCHKE DATE 11/9/81
RDS☐or XDS☐EXT. DATE UNCLASSIFIED
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☐ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

UNLESS "UNCLASSIFIED" REPRODUCTION FROM COPY IS PROHIBITED.

GOVERNMENT NOW HAD UNCONTROVERTIBLE PROOF, AND WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE UNITED STATES EXPERTS ON AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS AND MID AIR EXPLOSIONS COME TO CUBA TO EXAMINE WRECKAGE AND OTHER EVIDENCE. CASTRO DID NOT ATTACK UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OR OFFICIALS. SAID THAT ENTIRE MATTER OF CRIMINAL FLIGHTS OVER CUBA SHOULD BE OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO UNITED STATES, SINCE OBVIOUSLY SOMETHING WAS WRONG THERE. POINTED OUT THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD ASSIGNED HUNDREDS OF OFFICIALS WITHIN FLORIDA TO PREVENT SUCH FLIGHTS, THAT BASE FROM WHICH AIRCRAFT LEFT FOR CUBA, AND HAD APPARENTLY LEFT REPEATEDLY, WAS WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF A PRINCIPAL MILITARY AIR BASE, AND THAT U.S. HAD EXPENDED UNCOUNTED MILLIONS IN RADAR AND OTHER INSTALLATIONS FOR DEFENSE, AND YET APPEARED INCAPABLE OF PREVENTING CRIMINAL FLIGHTS SUCH AS THIS.

IN PARTICULARLY TELLING PARAGRAPHS, CASTRO SAID APPROXIMATELY: "THE REALLY SERIOUS ASPECT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THIS TIME THEY WERE NOT PLANNING TO ATTACK CANE FIELDS, BUT A SUGAR CENTRAL WHERE 266 PEOPLE WERE WORKING. IF THE BOMB HAD BEEN DROPPED THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN MANY VICTIMS. SO IT WAS AN ATTACK NOT AGAINST THINGS BUT AGAINST PEOPLE, AS THOUGH WE WERE LIVING IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

"WE MUST CONSIDER TO WHAT EXTREMES THE REACTION OF THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE REACHED HAD THE BOMB DROPPED AND CUBANS BEEN KILLED. I BELIEVE CUBA IS THE ONLY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, LIVING AT PEACE WITH ALL, WHICH IS BEING ATTACKED BY AIR FROM BASES LOCATED IN TERRITORY OF A NEIGHBOR.

"IT IS TRULY REGRETTABLE THAT THE INVESTIGATIONS TAKE PLACE AFTER THE EVENT, AFTER THE PEOPLE WITNESS BARBARITIES OF THIS NATURE. IS IT POSSIBLE TO BLAME THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT FOR THE PRESENT STATE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES? WHAT HAS CAUSED THE DETERIORATION IN OUR RELATIONS? MORE THAN THE WELCOME EXTENDED TO THE WAR CRIMINALS, MORE THAN THE DEFAMATORY PRESS CAMPAIGN, MORE THAN THE HOSTILE STATEMENTS OF CONGRESSMEN AND OFFICIALS, MORE EVEN THAN THE RECEPTION GIVEN TO THE TRAITOR DIAZ LANZ BY A COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, IT IS THE AERIAL ATTACKS ON OUR TERRITORY, WHICH NOW NUMBER OVER THIRTY, AND FOR WHICH OUR GOVERNMENT CAN IN NO WISE BE CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE.

"IF IT HAD BEEN THE OTHER WAY AROUND, IF INSTEAD OF OVER THIRTY ATTACKS ON CUBA, ONE SMALL CUBAN PLANE HAD ATTACKED AMERICAN TERRITORY, PUBLIC OPINION THERE WOULD BE ENRAGED. ONE CANNOT IMAGINE THE DIFFICULTIES WE WOULD CONFRONT. BUT IT IS US, THE SMALL NATION, WHO SUFFR. IF WE WANT AIRCRAFT TO DEFEND OURSELVES, WE ENCOUNTER INTERFERENCE. AND ON TOP OF HAVING TO SUPPORT ATTACKS FROM ABROAD, WE HAVE TO ENDURE THE CHARGE THAT WE CONSTITUTE A DANGER FOR THE UNITED STATES, THAT WE HAVE ROCKET BASES, THAT WE HAVE "MIGS", AND A WHOLE LIST OF CHARGES.

"WHO CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE THAT WE CONSTITUTE A DANGER FOR THE UNITED STATES? AND YET WE ARE THE COUNTRY THAT SUFFERS AGGRESSIONS, THE ONE THAT HAS TO FEAR FOR ITS SECURITY."

BALANCE OF PROGRAM WAS DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION OF MIKOYAN, COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT WITH USSR, AND A VARIETY OF OTHER TOPICS. PRINCIPAL POINTS WERE:

1) CASTRO HIGHLY IMPRESSED BY MIKOYAN, WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS SERIOUS, STURDY, WITHOUT HYPOCRISY, RESPECTFUL AND TACTFUL. SAID NO POLITICAL SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.

2) COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT WITH USSR HIGHLY ADVANTAGEOUS FOR CUBA. PROVISION FOR PAYMENT OF ONE-FIFTH IN DOLLARS MEANT FAVORABLE BALANCE FOR CUBA. AGREEMENT CONSTITUTES NO DANGER TO U.S., OR THREAT TO U.S. SUGAR SUPPLIES, BUT RATHER IS SUCCESSFUL CUBAN EFFORT TO EXPAND SUGAR MARKET. CASTRO WOULD BE DELIGHTED IF COULD MAKE A HUNDRED SUCH AGREEMENTS. UNITED STATES DID NOT OBJECT TO CUBA SELLING SUGAR IN OTHER WORLD MARKETS, AND THERE WAS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR OBJECTION TO SALES TO RUSSIA.

3) STATEMENT IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE THAT USSR AND CUBA WOULD COLLABORATE TO ACHIEVE COEXISTENCE AND PEACE WAS SIMPLY REAFFIRMATION OF BASIC OBJECTIVES OF CHARTER OF UNITED NATIONS.

4) CUBAN GOVERNMENT HOPED TO INTENSIFY SEARCH FOR PETROLEUM, AND WOULD OBTAIN EQUIPMENT FROM USSR IF AVAILABLE AND DESIRABLE.

5) MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM IS ESTABLISHMENT OF STEEL INDUSTRY, USING PLENTIFUL CUBAN LATERITE DEPOSITS AS BASIS.

6) NO CHANGES IN CABINET OR OTHER TOP GOVERNMENTAL POSTS PENDING.

7) PREPARATIONS FOR CONFERENCE UNDER-INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS CONTINUING, AND CONFERENCE WOULD PROBABLY BE HELD IN SEPTEMBER.

8) RECENT STATEMENTS OF BETANCOURT CONCERNING COMMUNISM BID NOT INVOLVE VEILED CRITICISM OF CASTRO GOVERNMENT. HOLDS HIGH OPINION OF BETANCOURT, AND PARTICULARLY OF VENEZUELAN PEOPLE, AND CUBA DOES NOT INTERFERE IN VENEZUELAN SITUATION WHERE CONDITIONS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. ALSO REGARDS LOPEZ MATEOS HIGHLY.

9) NOT AWARE OF ANY INVITATION TO ADLAI STEVENSON TO VISIT CUBA.

10) GOVERNMENT PLANS CREATE SUBSTANTIAL CUBAN MERCHANT MARINE.

11) RELATIONS WITH CATHOLIC CHURCH "MOST FRIENDLY", AS WITH ALL CHURCHES. GOVERNMENT OPPOSES NO CREED, AND NO SECTORS OF SOCIETY EXCEPT COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES AND "LAT FUNDISTS".

12) CUBA HAS NOT YET ACQUIRED ADDITIONAL AIRCRAFT, BUT WILL DO SO IF NECESSARY. QUESTION OF ARMAMENTS NOT DISCUSSED WITH MIKOYAN, BUT CUBA RESERVES RIGHT TO PURCHASE THEM WHEREVER NECESSARY.

BRADDOCK

ALB